



ANOKA COUNTY NEWS

Volume 2-2016

ANOKA COUNTY HAS A FULL SLATE OF HIGHWAY
IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS UNDERWAY TO MOVE
PEOPLE AND PRODUCTS FASTER, SAFER, AND MORE EFFICIENTLY.

CONTENTS

5

A conversation about fiscal disparities

7

Body cameras: a new tool for law enforcement

10

Recycling assistance for your business

14

Libraries transform!



Surf's up!
Visit Bunker Beach Water Park for wet & wild summer fun!

GREATER MINNESOTA GATEWAY PROJECT UNDERWAY

Anoka County, along with the City of Ramsey, recently celebrated completion of the new Armstrong Blvd. interchange over U.S. Highway 10/169 and the BNSF Railroad tracks. (See cover photo)

"This intersection has had higher crash numbers – and more severe crashes – than other similar intersections in the state," said Matt Look, vice chair of the county board and chair of the Anoka County Regional Railroad Authority. "This new interchange will be the first of many road improvement projects that will save lives and help businesses and people in Anoka County thrive and prosper."

The \$42 million project was funded with a mix of federal, state, region, county, and city dollars. "Anoka County took the lead in completing these critical safety and capacity improvements in the Highway 10/169 corridor," said Rhonda Sivarajah, chair of the Anoka County Board. "This project is a prime example of how we like to work: in partnership with our city, state, region, and federal leaders to get the job done."

The new interchange at Armstrong Blvd. is just the first step in the Greater Minnesota Gateway project. Next up on the "to do" list is in the city of Anoka between Thurston Ave. and Fair oak Ave. Here plans are to remove signals and build a full interchange at Thurston Ave. and a grade separated intersection at Fair oak Ave. In addition, a third lane is planned for U.S. Highway 10 in both directions between Round Lake Blvd. and Hanson Blvd. in Coon Rapids. Finally, in Ramsey, plans are to remove signals and build grade separated intersections at Ramsey Blvd. and Sunfish Lake Blvd.

These much-needed projects will cut the crash rate, reduce congestion, and provide a safe and efficient roadway for pedestrians, motorists, and commercial traffic.



ARMSTRONG BLVD. INTERCHANGE

THURSTON/FAIROAK AVES. INTERCHANGE & GRADE SEPARATION

ADD THIRD LANE BETWEEN ROUND LAKE & HANSON BLVDS.

RAMSEY BLVD. INTERCHANGE

SUNFISH LAKE BLVD. INTERCHANGE

LEARN MORE AT
GREATERMNGATEWAY.COM
OR ON TWITTER AT
#GREATERMNGATEWAY

Getting from here to there throughout Anoka County is getting faster, more convenient, and safer thanks to several important highway construction projects now underway. "We understand the critical importance of quality roads and bridges to move people and goods," said Anoka County Commissioner Robyn West. "These types of projects are at the core of government's mission and are key to maintaining the exceptional quality of life we enjoy here."

BUNKER LAKE BLVD. REDO WILL IMPROVE SAFETY, ACCESS

Work is underway on a project to widen and reconstruct a 2.7 mile segment of Bunker Lake Blvd. from Crane St. in Andover to Van Buren St. in Ham Lake. "Bunker Lake Blvd. is a crucial east-west corridor," said Anoka County Commissioner Julie Braastad. "Our county highway engineers worked closely with members of the public and city officials to refine the project design to meet the needs of motorists and area residents." The project will:

- Reconstruct the existing two-lane road into a four-lane divided roadway with a center median and curb, gutter, and outside shoulders;
- Reconstruct major intersections and add turn lanes;
- Install bus/truck pull-out lanes at the BNSF railroad crossing;

- Add a pedestrian bicycle path to provide a connection to regional trails;
- Construct an underpass east of Bunker Lake to provide safe access to Bunker Hills Regional Park;
- Add a sidewalk on the west side of Crane St. to provide access to the trail along Bunker Lake Blvd.;
- Add an eastbound left turn lane at Wintergreen St. to allow safer access to the neighborhood;
- Add a traffic signal at the intersection of Bunker Lake Blvd. and Sycamore St.

To learn more, go to anokacounty.us/highway and click on "Construction Projects."

Investing in county roads

Since 2002, Anoka County has invested more than \$76 million in pavement rehabilitation projects on the county's 414 miles of roadway. Our PQI – Pavement Quality Index – is steadily improving, going from an average of 65 in 2002 to 75 in 2014, thanks to this aggressive rehab program. In 2002, just 39 percent of county roads had a PQI of 71 or better; in 2014, nearly 70 percent were rated 71 or better.

Here's another comparison: in 2002, we spent more than \$2 million on resurfacing projects; this year, we'll spend \$7 million – more than three times that amount.

HIGHWAY PROJECTS AWAIT FUNDING

In addition to additional Greater Minnesota Gateway projects on Hwy. 10/169, Anoka County is working to secure funding to address significant safety and capacity problems on several other county roadways.

A fix for crumbling Hwy. 97 bridge

The two-lane bridge over I-35 at Hwy. 97 in Columbus is too narrow and pieces of the crumbling bridge deck have fallen onto the interstate below. A MnDOT proposal would close the existing bridge for up to a year to build a new two-lane bridge, requiring motorists to use an 18-mile detour. A coalition of leaders from Anoka County, Columbus, Forest Lake, Washington County, and Forest Lake Schools is advocating for a plan that would instead keep the interchange open to traffic during construction and add multiple lanes to increase safety and handle growing traffic volume. Learn more at anokacounty.us/videos.

Railroad Crossing on Hanson Blvd.

Up to 80 trains pass through Coon Rapids each day. At the Hanson Blvd. railroad crossing, traffic backs up for as long as 25 minutes at a time, resulting in critical delays for ambulances and other emergency vehicles. Plans are to build an overpass to separate road and train traffic to improve safety and ensure timely passage for motorists and emergency responders.

A CONVERSATION ABOUT FISCAL DISPARITIES



The fiscal disparities program was established in 1971. There was a recognition that communities compete for economic development in the region and the state had invested a great deal of money into other parts of the metro in the way of roads, bridges, the airport, and the MUSA line, which prompted more growth in those areas of the metro. It was understood that other parts of the metro without the commercial industrial tax base still needed to have good schools to provide for an educated workforce and needed to provide for basic infrastructure. The program was also created to ensure natural resources within the area were protected. The late Charlie Weaver Sr. is considered the architect of Minnesota's fiscal disparities program. In the following, his son, Charlie Weaver Jr., executive director of the Minnesota Business Partnership, discusses the program's origins and its critical importance to the continuing prosperity of our entire region.

Q: Given today's partisan political climate, do you think this program could be passed today?

CW: No. I think it's a good indication that no other state, no other country really, has successfully modeled it. Other states have tried to duplicate what we've done here because they recognize it's a really valuable program. But no one has been able to muster the political will to do it.

Q: It took tremendous foresight to recognize that the success of a community shouldn't be dependent on arbitrary factors, such as where the airport is located.

CW: That impacted a ton of communities and made some better off and some worse off. At the same time, some communities were saying we don't want another park because parks don't produce any tax base. They would happily take a power plant or any commercial/ industrial development instead. But you don't want cities incented to just put up buildings and bulldoze all their parks. Frankly, fiscal disparities is the reason we have such wonderful parks and lakes and open spaces in the metro area. Fiscal disparities makes sure we don't punish cities for having parks and open spaces that don't produce tax revenue.

Q: What do you think when you hear participants in the fiscal disparities program described as "givers and takers" or "net contributors or net recipients?"

CW: Well, givers or takers is just wrong. That doesn't reflect what it is. There are communities that contribute and there are communities that benefit. Most of the brilliance of fiscal disparities is it doesn't take away completely the incentive to grow with development. If you're a contributor, that's a good thing. Most cities would love to be a contributor because that means they've got a good, strong commercial/industrial tax base and they're growing and thriving. So the law itself doesn't penalize you for growth. It just doesn't penalize the areas that aren't able to grow for whatever reason, and often the reasons are arbitrary: the lack of a decent highway, the distance from an airport or a river or whatever.

Q: Sometimes a city is a recipient, then they achieve some development success and become a contributor. And then they think the program should go away.

CW: But wait a couple of years and they'll change their

(continued on page 6)

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mind again. For example, Minneapolis has gone between contributor and benefactor probably 10 or 20 times. For a long time they benefitted from fiscal disparities and now they are a contributor to it because they are successful. But 10 years from now, as the suburbs grow, they may be a recipient once again. **(Note: Anoka County is currently a fiscal disparities recipient. County property taxes on an average priced home (market value of \$183,700) are 8 percent lower because of contributions from fiscal disparities.)**

Q: So stay the course?

CW: Yes. It's just shortsighted to think that because now you're a contributor, you want to get rid of the program. It doesn't make sense because ultimately, we all benefit from it.

Q: How do you react to the perception that fiscal disparities recipients should direct those funds solely toward economic development activities?

CW: That was not the intent. When the program was first implemented, the discussion was not about needing more money for economic development, it was about the tax base, which supports a lot of things beyond just economic development. For example, fiscal disparities equalizes education funding, which has always been

a goal for Minnesota. We don't have these huge gaps between wealthy and poorer school districts because we equalize the money. That's a basic starting point for school fairness. That's one of the reasons Anoka County school districts can compete; our tax base is a little higher because of fiscal disparities. Economic development is certainly an appropriate use of the increased tax base because of fiscal disparities, but it's really much broader than that.

Q: And economic development doesn't refer solely to workforce and employer-centered programs.

CW: Right. Every single thing that your tax base funds, including police and fire, education, basic services, infrastructure – all those things benefit from fiscal disparities. It's interesting because we are kind of coming full circle. We have organizations today that work to educate people about how important regionalism is and yet we have this (fiscal disparities) legislation that passed in 1971. They recognized then that if we don't all work together and make this thing work as a unit, we're going to end up with a metropolitan system that isn't as attractive or successful as it could be.

Learn more about fiscal disparities at anokacounty.us/videos.

“Fiscal disparities equalizes education funding, which has always been a goal for Minnesota.”

*Charlie Weaver,
executive director
Minnesota Business Partnership*

ANOKA COUNTY, GREATER MSP WORKING TO GROW JOBS

Anoka County partners with Greater MSP, a regional economic development organization, to help retain, expand, and recruit new businesses to Anoka County. In the past two years, this partnership has supported the creation of more than 1,000 jobs in Anoka County, with close to \$40 million in investments. (See chart below.)

Business	Jobs	City	Investment
BAE Systems	630	Fridley	\$15M
Measurement Specialties, Inc.	100	Andover	\$5.25M
Incertec	170	Fridley	\$3M
Dugas-Bowers Plating Co.	25	Fridley	\$3M
ConAgra Food, Inc.	75	Fridley	\$5.5M
Life Fitness	26	Ramsey	\$5.6M



ANOKA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Body cameras: a new tool for law enforcement

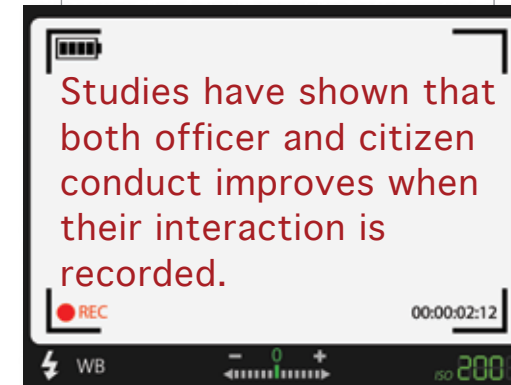
by Anoka County Sheriff James Stuart

Within the Anoka County Sheriff's Office, we have always strived to ensure the work we do exceeds expectations and preserves the public trust. Public perception of our office plays a key role in that effort. Consequently, I have been paying close attention to the ongoing national debate about the use of body cameras by law enforcement. I want to ensure that when the time comes to implement such a program in Anoka County, it will be done correctly, with proper consideration given to every aspect of such an undertaking.

Studies have shown that both officer and citizen conduct improves when their interaction is recorded. Officer complaints generally decrease when cameras are worn. Additionally, the recordings allow law enforcement agencies to better assess and resolve complaints and identify training or personnel issues. There is, however, a price to be paid.

In addition to the actual cost of the equipment, there are significant ongoing expenses related to software, hardware, storage, and management of the equipment and data. This investment in technology is becoming more of a societal expectation as we venture further into our "CSI" culture.

The retention and distribution of the recorded data is an area that requires careful planning to ensure that appropriate rules and safeguards are in place. There are also evidentiary considerations related to criminal cases that could affect the outcome if



the data is not handled appropriately. Similarly, privacy issues related to mental health or crisis calls must be balanced to protect those involved.

As we work to ensure that we develop and adhere to model policies and guidelines, we are also researching the best practices for each area of implementation. We know that with real world limitations, a body camera system will not meet every need or capture every aspect of reality. But it will serve as a valuable tool to help fill in the gaps.

I believe there is a general desire by the public to ensure transparency of law enforcement through the use of body cameras. Within the profession, peace

officers also wish to use cameras because they want public support. Officers are very aware that cameras substantially support the actions of officers in the vast majority of cases. However, because it is also my role to ensure the rights of all our citizens are safeguarded, I did not intend to implement a body camera program until a law was in place that would properly protect everyone who may be on a deputy's recording. I'm happy to say that new body camera legislation recently signed into state law accomplishes that goal. As a result, the Anoka County Sheriff's Office will deploy the use

of body cameras for uniformed patrol deputies in early 2017.

While the new state law does not require that body cameras be implemented, it does clearly define how the cameras are to be used, requires written policy and audits of the data, and provides guidelines for the retention and destruction of data.

The primary reason the Anoka County Sheriff's Office is introducing body cameras is to offer further assurance of our desire to be transparent and accountable to the citizens we proudly serve. That has always been our goal; this is a natural next step that we gladly take.



SPEND YOUR SUMMER ON THE WATER

ADDITIONAL CLASSES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT ANOKACOUNTYPARKS.COM

● INTRODUCTION TO KAYAKING

WHERE East Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

WHEN August 23; 2 - 4 pm

WHERE Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, Centerville Beach

WHEN July 28; 4 - 6 pm
August 10; 2 - 4 pm

WHERE Rum River South County Park

WHEN August 25; 6 - 8 pm

Ages 15+ No experience necessary. Pre-registration is required. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by a registered adult. **\$25/person (+ tax)**

● KAYAKING – THE NEXT LEVEL!

WHERE Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, Centerville Beach

WHEN July 28; 6 - 8 pm

WHERE East Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

WHEN August 23; 4 - 6 pm

Ages 15+ Bring your own boat or we will provide one. Pre-registration is required. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by a registered adult. **\$25/person (+tax)**

● CANOE AND KAYAK BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

WHERE Wargo Nature Center

WHEN August 18; 7:30 - 10 pm

Ages 15+ Pre-registration is required. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by a registered adult. **\$15/person (+ tax) (includes canoe or kayak rental)**

● VOYAGEUR CANOE

WHERE East Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

WHEN August 26; 2 - 4 pm

All Ages Participants will have the unique opportunity to paddle this big boat with up to 15 other paddlers. Pre-registration is required. **\$10/person (+ tax)**

● INTRODUCTION TO FISHING

WHERE East Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

WHEN August 30; 6 - 8 pm

All Ages A fishing license is not required for this instructional class. Pre-registration is required. **\$10/person; \$5/per additional family member (+ tax)**

● BIRDING BY BOAT

WHERE Wargo Nature Center

WHEN August 30; 9 am - 12 pm

All Ages No experience in boats or birding is required. Binoculars are available for use. Pre-registration is required. **\$10/adult (+tax), kids 17 and under are free; all equipment is provided.**

● RICE CREEK PADDLING ADVENTURE

WHERE Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve

WHEN July 27; 12 - 4 pm

Ages 15+ Pre-registration is required. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by a registered adult. **\$20/person (+ tax) (includes shuttle) Boat rental fee is \$20/boat**

● STAND UP PADDLE BOARDING

WHERE Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, Centerville Beach

WHEN August 11; 3 - 4:30 pm or 6 - 7:30 pm

WHERE East Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

WHEN August 24; 1 - 2:30 pm

Ages 15+ Pre-registration is required. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by a registered adult. **\$20/person (+ tax)**

EQUIPMENT RENTAL



KAYAKS - SINGLE

\$10/hour
\$35/day

Rental available at
Wargo Nature Center



KAYAKS - DOUBLE

\$15/hour
\$40/day

Rental available at
Wargo Nature Center



CANOES

\$10/hour
\$30/day

Rental available at
Wargo Nature Center



GEOCACHING

\$5/GPS unit for 2 hours

Rental available at
Wargo Nature Center
Coon Rapids Dam
Visitor Center

Rental equipment may not be taken out of the park where it was rented.

FOR LAND LOVERS

● BUNKER BUTTERFLY BASH

WHERE Bunker Hills Regional Park
(Meet in front of the Activities Center)

WHEN August 13; 2 - 3 pm

All Ages Binoculars and butterfly nets are provided but feel free to bring your own! Pre-registration is required. **\$5/person (+ tax)**

● BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS

WHERE Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, Heritage Lab

WHEN August 25; 8 - 10 am

Ages 12+ Meet at the Heritage Lab site on the east side of Co. Rd 14, just across from the entrance to the Wargo Nature Center. Pre-registration is required. **\$5/person (+ tax)**

NEW! ORGANICS RECYCLING DROP-OFF SITES

Residents may now drop off organic waste for recycling at Anoka County's compost sites in Coon Rapids and Lino Lakes. Simply collect food waste and other organic materials in a kitchen pail lined with a compostable bag liner. Once it's full, tie off the bag and place it in the organics collection container at either compost site. Please sign up for the program to receive additional information and a free starter kit (kitchen pail and compostable liner bags). Sign up online at anokacounty.us/recycle or by calling 763-323-5730.

The cities of Columbia Heights, Coon Rapids, Lino Lakes, and Spring Lake Park have organics drop-off programs for their residents as well.

What is organic waste?

- food scraps: fruits, vegetables, peels, pits, and rinds
- meat, poultry, fish (including bones)
- coffee grounds, tea bags
- dairy products
- paper towels, napkins, pizza delivery boxes
- eggs and egg shells
- tissues, cotton balls
- certified compostable products (plastic foodware and bags labeled with a Cedar Grove Composting or Biodegradable Products Institute logo)



RECYCLING ASSISTANCE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Anoka County offers free assistance to businesses to help them identify ways to reduce waste and potentially save money on waste disposal. We can help you establish a recycling program by determining what types of materials your business can recycle, explaining options for various types of hauling for recyclables, and educating employees about recycling. We are partnering with the Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation (MWWF) through the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to provide the following services:

- On-site waste assessments;
- Tips on waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and pollution prevention;
- Follow-up and ongoing assistance.

The business assistance program through MWWF can help businesses save money on solid waste taxes, solid waste charges, and through reduced disposal and procurement costs. Many businesses that have already participated in the program report they have achieved greater efficiencies in their business processes as well.

Conducting a waste assessment can be as simple as a quick walk-through of your facility or as detailed as a complete review of all purchasing, materials use, and disposal practices. We will help you identify opportunities to prevent waste and pollution, purchase products containing recycled materials, and increase recycling and reuse of waste materials. Anoka County also provides business assistance grants to help with some one-time



From left: Jon Klapperich, Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation, offers technical assistance to Amanda Dahlin and Scott Brinkhaus of Vision Woodworking, Fridley.

startup costs when implementing new recycling programs or improving an existing program.

Get started by contacting us to conduct a free, facility walk-through and waste assessment. Call 763-323-5737 or email commercial@co.anoka.mn.us to schedule a site visit today.

ANOKA COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Support for crime victims

by Anoka County Attorney Tony Palumbo

No one expects to be a crime victim. Last year in Anoka County, more than 1,000 men, women and children – from all walks of life – fell victim to criminal acts. Crime victims and their loved ones often find themselves in a complex web of emotions as they attempt to cope with their victimization. Feelings of disbelief, denial, isolation, confusion, anger, grief, and sorrow are common and there is no right or wrong way to feel.

We know that being a crime victim can be a confusing and difficult experience; that is why we want to help victims navigate the criminal justice system and assist them in their recovery. The *Anoka County Victim Witness Program* was created in 1979 to accomplish exactly that. Under Minnesota law, crime victims have certain rights, including the right to be notified of the status of the criminal case, the right to participate in the prosecution process, the right to protection from harm, and the right to apply for financial assistance.

Anoka County Victim Witness Specialists:

- Provide services to victims of felony crimes and juvenile crimes occurring in Anoka County;
- Help crime victims understand the criminal justice system and their rights;
- Work with prosecuting attorneys to ensure victim input is considered in the criminal case;
- Act as a liaison to other criminal justice agencies, such as law enforcement and Corrections;
- Provide ongoing notification about the status of a case;
- Provide escort and support at court hearings;
- Assist with financial reimbursement applications;

- Prepare victims and witnesses to testify at trial;
- Refer to appropriate community services for individual needs, such as counseling or support groups.

Victim witness specialists meet crime victims with compassion and dignity at the time a criminal case is charged and walk them through the prosecution process to disposition of the case and beyond. Information and assistance are offered to provide options so that victims can be empowered to make decisions that will benefit them and aid in their resolution process following the crime. Services are victim-centered, so victim witness specialists customize their notification based on what each victim needs.

Restorative justice services, including victim-offender dialogues, are also offered to victims.

These meetings provide a safe place for victims to share their story with offenders and make them aware of the impact of the crime, as well as make a recommendation about how they feel the harm can be repaired. Victims play a vital role in the criminal justice system and their cooperation is essential in holding offenders accountable. The mission of the *Anoka County Victim Witness Program* is to promote the rights and interests of victims and witnesses of crime, while addressing individual needs due to victimization and encouraging participation in the criminal justice process.

If you would like more information about the *Anoka County Victim Witness Program*, contact us at 763-323-5559 or victimwitness@co.anoka.mn.us.

Crime victims and their loved ones often find themselves in a complex web of emotions as they attempt to cope with their victimization



LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR WELL & SEPTIC FIX-UPS

Low interest loans are available to eligible property owners and businesses located in Anoka County to repair or replace private well and septic systems under a program offered by Anoka County Community Development and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Best Management Practices Program (AgBMP).

Loans up to \$200,000 are offered at below market interest rates. Property owners must be current on their mortgage payments and property taxes to be eligible. Loans will be repaid via a special assessment on the property tax statement through Anoka County. For more information or to obtain a loan application, call 763-323-5722 or go to anokacounty.us/cd.

Loans can be used to:

- Repair or replace failed or failing septic systems;
- Relocate a private well to meet setback requirements;
- Repair broken casings in a private well;
- Seal a well that is no longer in use or is contaminated;
- Solve an existing or potential groundwater pollution problem;
- Repair or replace non-compliant septic systems;
- Repair a failed or failing drain field.

ABSENTEE VOTING: NO EXCUSES NEEDED

Anyone can vote prior to Primary or General Election Day by completing an absentee ballot. In the past, voters had to have a reason why they couldn't physically get to their polling place on Election Day. Today, no explanation is necessary.

How to vote absentee

Complete an absentee ballot application – find it at anokacounty.us/absenteevoting or call 763-323-5275 to have one mailed to you – and return it by mail, fax, or email. An absentee ballot will be mailed to you

within two business days, along with voting instructions and a return envelope.

In-person absentee voting

You may also cast your absentee ballot in person at your city hall or at the government center in Anoka during normal business hours and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. the Saturday prior to each election.

Go to anokacounty.us/elections for more information.

QUESTIONS ON NEW FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Recently, some Anoka County residents have been notified by their mortgage company that their property is in a floodplain and they need to obtain flood insurance. Residents are rightly confused, since it's never been a requirement before. Why the change?

The confusion can be traced to FEMA's use of inaccurate base data when it remapped Anoka County's floodplains in 2011. Mortgage companies using those 2011 FEMA maps may have designated some properties as being in a floodplain when in fact, they are not.

Today, new technology, called LiDAR, is available to more accurately delineate

flood zone boundaries. In order to get the flood insurance requirement dropped, residents must send FEMA a "Letter of Map Amendment" (LOMA) application. FEMA is accepting the new LiDAR maps as part of the LOMA supporting documentation.

Anoka County has developed a new flood zone mapping application that uses the more accurate LiDAR maps to help residents and municipalities determine if property is in a floodplain. The new app also includes step-by-step instructions on filling out the LOMA form. Go to anokacounty.us/floodplain to learn more.

FIND YOUR BEST COMMUTING OPTION

Anoka County Commute Solutions provides free services to county residents, employers, and employees who want help determining their best commuting option, whether it's teleworking, walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling, taking the bus, or taking the train.



A few examples of Commute Solutions' free services include developing a customized travel demand management plan for employers, helping employers determine if teleworking is an option for their employees, and supplying signs for designated "premier" parking spots for employees who carpool or vanpool.

Commute Solutions also sponsors events throughout the year to highlight transportation options such as *Anoka County Bike to Work Week* in June and *Carpool to Work Month* in October.

For all you need to know about commuting in Anoka County, call Commute Solutions at 763-862-4260; email heidi.steinmetz@co.anoka.mn.us or go to commute-solutions.org.

STOP MOSQUITOS AND TICKS FROM BUGGING YOU



Summer is heating up! Are you taking steps to protect your family from mosquito and tick-transmitted diseases?

- Prevent mosquitoes from hatching. Dump any containers holding standing water.
- Protect yourself by avoiding tick habitats like wooded, brushy areas.
- Make sure to apply tick and mosquito repellent containing DEET. Up to 30 percent concentration is safe for kids two months and older.
- Wear loose fitting, light colored long sleeves and pants.
- Install and/or repair screens on windows and doors, or use air conditioning.

Visit health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/vectorborne or mmcd.org for more information.



LIBRARIES TRANSFORM

In this digital age, Anoka County Library continues to play a vital role in the educational and cultural life of our community, providing a place for people to connect, learn, and grow – to transform. While information delivery methods have changed over the years, our mission to connect people to ideas, information, and inspiration remains. Anoka County Library is a place of personal transformation.

Because job skills are built when learning is put into practice.

Because eBooks are perfect for late night reading.

Because creativity is good for business.

Because seeing Facebook photos of your grandkids is worth learning something new.

Bringing the library to senior centers

Librarians have been partnering with senior centers across Anoka County to connect older adults with library services, offering everything from technology classes to help downloading eBooks to book clubs – even a songwriting class! Toting a mobile laptop lab, librarians visit area senior centers to offer help getting started using a computer, navigating the Internet, creating an email account, learning social media, and using library databases. Senior center visitors can make an appointment with a librarian to learn how to download free eBooks or meet with others in their community for book discussions and recommendations on what to read next. Classes and individualized help are opening new doors to technology for older adults in Anoka County.

Last year, librarians from the Anoka County Library made 222 visits to schools, senior centers, homeless shelters, and other organizations, providing programs attended by 7,301 people!



Job training partnership is a win-win

The Anoka County Library and Anoka County's Job Training Center recently partnered to offer an area student a job training opportunity at the Mississippi Library. Sarah Abbood, a junior at Fridley High School, worked closely with Branch Manager Shannon Melham and Job Training Center Employment Representative Kristine Yost to meet her goals, which included improving her English, working with children, and developing marketable skills. "Sarah was a valuable asset to the Mississippi Library, shelving materials, assisting with projects, and providing assistance at classes and events," Melham said.



Sarah Abbood

Digital downloads: fast, easy, convenient

Gail Liljebald, a longtime resident of Lino Lakes, is an avid library user, enjoying reading whenever her schedule allows. Recently, after discovering the *Books and Beyond* class at the Centennial Library, she decided she wanted to explore new technology and eBooks. "I was a little slow to start because I love actual books but after learning how easy it is to use the technology, I was hooked," she said. "The tablet I use is just as convenient, if not more so, to read books on. I take it everywhere with me." Liljebald also learned the library offers free technology classes; she is looking forward to coming back and learning more. "I feel at home at the library," Liljebald said. "The staff at Centennial is so welcoming. The one-on-one teaching is great. I know I can come in with questions and will be able to get the help I need."



Gail Liljebald

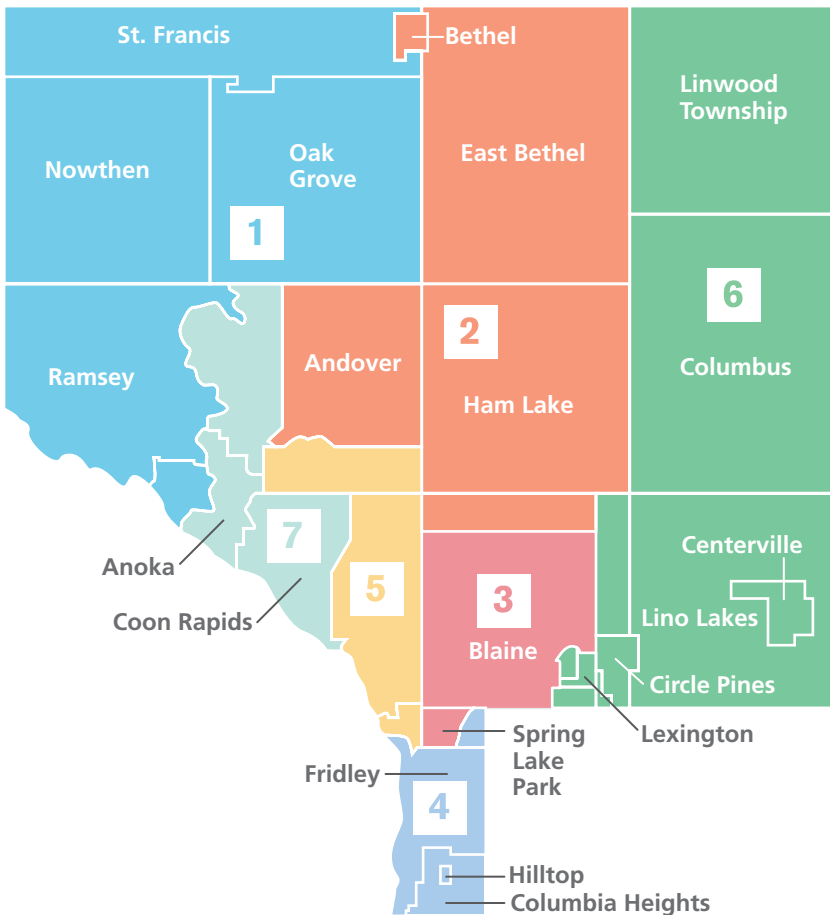
Last year the Anoka County Library had 315,606 digital downloads including eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines.



Visit our website!

ANOKA COUNTY LEADERSHIP

763-323-5700



Matt Look
DISTRICT 1
COMMISSIONER



Julie Braastad
DISTRICT 2
COMMISSIONER



Robyn West
DISTRICT 3
COMMISSIONER



Jim Kordiak
DISTRICT 4
COMMISSIONER



Mike Gamache
DISTRICT 5
COMMISSIONER



Rhonda Sivarajah
DISTRICT 6
COMMISSIONER



Scott Schulte
DISTRICT 7
COMMISSIONER



James Stuart
COUNTY
SHERIFF



Tony Palumbo
COUNTY
ATTORNEY

As elected officials, the County Board, County Attorney, and County Sheriff set policy and direction for their areas of responsibility.

County board meetings are generally held the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 9:30 a.m. in Room 705 of the Anoka County Government Center in Anoka. Watch board meetings live at anokacounty.us.

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